

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings includes changes to Figures 1, 2, 4, 5, 6-8 and 10-13. These sheets replace the original sheets including Figures 1, 2, 4, 5, 6-8 and 10-13.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action dated September 19, 2008. The Office Action objected to the drawings, the Specification and Claim 10 for certain informalities. The Office Action rejected Claims 4, 7, 9 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and rejected Claims 1, 4-6, 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102. Claims 2, 3, 7 and 10-12 are objected to as being dependent on a base claim but would otherwise be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, and if Claims 7 and 12 are amended to overcome the 35 U.S.C. §112 rejections. The Specification and drawings have been amended. Also, Claims 1, 4, 9 and 12 have been amended and Claims 13-18 have been newly added. No new matter has been added by way of amendment or the new claims.

A Petition for a One-Month Extension of Time is submitted herewith. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge deposit account 02-1818 for the Extension of Time fee and any other fees which are due and owing.

The drawings were objected to for certain informalities. Figs. 4 and 5 have been amended to include brackets to designate all of the elements as one complete figure. Figures 1, 2, 6-8 and 10 have been amended to correct the cross-hatching patterns. In this regard, the cross-hatching for element "20" in each of the figures was changed to include thicker lines and spaces in order to represent that this element can be a rubber material. The cross-hatching for element "11" was changed in each of the figures to have evenly spaced diagonal lines and to eliminate the double-lined cross-hatching. The stippling/dotted pattern for element "50" was changed in the figures to have evenly spaced diagonal line cross-hatching. Finally, element "60" was changed in Fig. 10 to have evenly spaced diagonal line cross-hatching, and to eliminate the double-lined cross-hatching. Figs. 11-13 were amended to include Prior Art labels, and Fig. 4 was amended to include a reference sign for element "31." Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the objections to the drawings have been overcome.

The Office Action objected to the Abstract of the disclosure and to paragraphs [0004], [0033], [0041], [0044] and [0045] for certain informalities. Each of the paragraphs has been amended as suggested in the Office Action. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the objections to the Abstract and the Specification have been overcome.

The Office Action objected to Claim 10 because of certain informalities. Applicant has amended Claim 10 as suggested in the Office Action. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the objection to Claim 10 has been overcome.

The Office Action rejected Claims 4, 7, 9 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 4 has been amended to clarify that the flanges are mounted to the ends of both a pipe and a pipe joint, and the pipe joint is selected from the group consisting of a valve, a reducer, a tee and an elbow. Claims 7 and 12 have been amended to provide antecedent basis for the objected to elements therein. Finally, Claim 9 has been amended to clarify that the packing comprises at least two circumferential hollows which are symmetrically formed in opposite sides of the packing. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits the 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph rejections have been overcome.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1, 4-6, 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,418,948 to Lew et al. ("Lew"). Of the rejected claims, Claim 1 is the sole independent claim. Claim 1 has been amended to recite, at least in part, a packing mounted to the flanges and having *inner rings protruding from and integrally formed around an inner circumferential surface of the packing* to closely engage with the ring grooves of the flanges. This amendment is supported the Specification at, for example, Figs. 6-8 and the corresponding description thereof.

Lew fails to disclose all of the elements of amended Claim 1 because Lew fails to disclose at least a packing mounted to the flanges and having inner rings protruding from and integrally formed around an inner circumferential surface of the packing to closely engage with the ring grooves of the flanges. In contrast, Lew discloses "a plurality of the combination elastic ring segments including the elastic ring segments of the Omega shaped cross section 43 and 44 superimposed on top of the elastic ring segments of the annular cross section with an opening 45 and 46." (See, Lew, col. 4, lines 1-10 and Fig. 6, emphasis added).

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejection of Claims 1, 4-6, 8 and 9 in view of Lew.

The Office Action also indicated that Claims 2, 3, 7, 10, 11 and 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening

claims. New independent Claim 13 incorporates the elements of objected to Claim 2 and Claim 1, new independent Claim 15 incorporates the elements of objected to Claim 7 and Claim 1, new independent Claim 16 incorporates the elements of objected to Claim 10 and Claim 1, and new independent Claim 17 incorporates the elements of objected to Claim 11 and Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that new Claims 13-18 should be allowable.

For at least the reasons above, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance and earnestly solicits reconsideration of same.

Respectfully submitted,

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